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# Chief of C.I.A. Assails Congress Over Security

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 13 — William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, asserted tonight that comments by members of Congress had caused "the repeated compromise of sensitive intelligence sources and methods."

In a strongly worded letter to the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Mr. Casey contended that the Congressional oversight of intelligence agencies "has gone seriously awry." He said that some Congressional attacks on the agency's performance had been "inaccurate," "off the cuff" or "unfounded."

A spokesman for the Central Intelligence Agency would not elaborate on what specific breaches of security might have been caused by members of Congress.

Mr. Casey's letter was released tonight after several weeks of mounting criticism of the Central Intelligence Agency by some members of Congress. The Congressmen have questioned the handling of the cases of Vitaly S. Yurchenko, a Soviet intelligence officer, and of Edward Lee Howard, a former C.I.A. officer accused of spying for the Soviet Union.

Mr. Casey said his letter was prompted by newspaper accounts of criticism of the agency by the intelligence committee chairman, Dave Durenberger, a Minnesota Republican,

at a luncheon meeting with reporters on Wednesday.

Mr. Durenberger has asserted that he was misquoted in some accounts. But Mr. Casey's letter was clearly aimed at the broader issue of whether it was appropriate to have public discussion of certain sensitive issues overseen by the intelligence committees in the House and Senate.

Mr. Durenberger, in a letter to The Washington Post, said the newspaper had "done a great disservice" in its reporting of the luncheon. He said his comments were taken "entirely out of context" and he called the report by The Post "factually incorrect." Mr. Durenberger wrote. "As I am certain other correspondents at the press luncheon would agree, the thrust of my remarks was positive."

At the session, Mr. Durenberger praised Mr. Casey and the work of the agency.

A spokesman for Mr. Durenberger said tonight that he could not be reached immediately for comment.

Mr. Casey's letter makes reference to the account carried by The Post "and other newspapers."

Robert Kaiser, assistant managing editor/national news of The Post, said the account contained two errors which had been inserted by editors, but he said, "We stand by the thrust of the story."

Alluding to statements by Mr. Durenberger's staff that he had been misquoted, Mr. Casey wrote: "That is not the point. Public discussion of sensitive information and views revealed in a closed session of an oversight committee is always damaging and inadvisable. As we have discussed many times, if the oversight process is to work at all, it cannot do so on the front page of American newspapers."

"The cost in compromised sources, damaged morale and the effect on overall capabilities is simply too high."

Mr. Durenberger and Senator Patrick J. Leahy, the Vermont Democrat who is vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, have both argued for fuller public discussion of intelligence issues.

At a speech this year to the John Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Mr. Durenberger suggested that intelligence agencies sometimes used secrecy as a means of hiding embarrassing mistakes.

In his letter, Mr. Casey took particular issue with what he said were Mr. Durenberger's comments Wednesday to reporters that the agency had failed to understand the Soviet Union and had not produced long-range evaluations of such issues as the rise of Shiite fundamentalism, the insurgency in the Philippines, or the energy crisis.

Mr. Casey called this assertion "tragically wrong," saying, "These are all areas where the intelligence community has produced an enormous number of long-range studies over the last six years or more and where we have been far out front."